

Itchingfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. It develops a series of distinctive policies which get to the heart of the character and the appearance of the neighbourhood area.

The presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Aims have been designed to supplement the policies.

The Basic Conditions Statement and the Consultation Statement are both comprehensive and informative.

The Plan has approached the development of new housing in a positive fashion. The Sustainability Appraisal has considered an extensive range of potential opportunities.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise issues for clarification with the Parish Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of my report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.

I set out specific clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan.

Policies 1&2

The policies have good and effective approaches.

I am minded to recommend a modification to each policy so that they are applied proportionately to take account of the scale, nature and location of proposed developments.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 6

As I read the policy the third part is a free-standing component rather than following on from the opening element and the first two parts.

Was this the Parish Council's intention?

Policy 9

In general terms the policy has been well-developed.

In the ninth criterion:

- on what basis has the Parish Council decided to propose very specific details for the height of commercial buildings?
- does the reference to a 20-metre distance from any house refer to existing houses or new houses on the site (or both)?

In general terms has the policy been prepared on the basis that the principal access into the Summers Ponds site would continue to be in the existing location?

If this is the case, should it refer to the need for a satisfactory arrangement between the new development and the access road?

Policy 12

This policy sets out a positive local approach to design.

Nevertheless, I am minded to recommend modifications as follows:

- to ensure that it is applied proportionately to take account of the scale, nature and location of proposed developments.
- to ensure that it is positively-worded (development will be supported which positively addresses the following matters...) rather than presented in the negative tone in the submitted policy.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on these propositions?

Policy 16

This policy sets out a positive local approach to economic growth.

However, in the second part of the policy how would the District Council be able to conclude that any development would benefit the 'well-being' of the parish in a clear and consistent basis? Could this element of the policy be removed from the policy without otherwise affecting its approach and direction?

Are the criteria in the fourth part of the policy intended to be applied to all new employment development in general, and to developments which respond to the first three parts of the policy in particular?

Monitoring and Review

The Plan has taken a positive approach to this important matter.

It is clear that it has reflected the arrangements that the District Council has put in place for parishes preparing neighbourhood development plans as it prepares its emerging Local Plan.

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

In particular does it wish to comment on the representations from:

- Horsham District Council;
- Hunter Group (ECE Planning);
- Miller Homes;
- Historic England (on the two proposed housing allocations); and
- Inspired Villages.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the points in this Note by 13 May 2021. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

In the event that certain responses are available before others I am happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled please could it come to me directly from the District Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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15 April 2021